



**HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY!** Did you know Mother's Day was first observed in 1908? It was designated by Presidential proclamation and recognized officially by Congress and the President in 1914. It is celebrated in honor of mothers on the second Sunday of May.

# GAZEBOEXPRES



YOUR COMMUNITY NEWS AND EVENT SOURCE FOR THE TOWN OF HIGHLAND • MAY 2011

## DOLLARS AND SENSE

### GRIFFITH AND HIGHLAND EXPLORE CONSOLIDATING PARKS, PUBLIC WORKS AND FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES

In an historic first, the Town Councils and Clerk-Treasurers from Highland and Griffith discussed merging departments to become more efficient and save money.

The law allows communities to consolidate big-ticket items, such as park and fire services. Highland Clerk-Treasurer Michael Griffin said consolidation has merit.

"We need to move from talking to doing and engaging the tools available to us in new ways," Griffin said.

Griffith Councilman George Jerome said there are many factors that would make a true consolidation of departments between the two towns difficult, if not impossible.

"In a perfect world, Griffith and Highland would have been a single community," Jerome said. "Today, there is a pride of citizenship for residents of each community that would make some of these initiatives very difficult, especially since we cannot show any upfront savings to our residents."

Highland Councilman Dan Vassar agreed.

"We need to walk before we run. I think we need to look for common areas where we can work together to help all of our residents," Vassar said. "We, as a council, are always looking for ways to increase efficiencies and reduce costs. I want to talk to residents throughout the community to find out how they feel." ☺

## STATE FUNDS RUN DRY FOR LITTLE CAL

The state and federal governments have spent \$245 million to construct dikes and levees protecting Northwest Indiana from the Little Calumet River but are not willing to maintain the structures that hold back the water.

The Indiana General Assembly passed the state budget in April without funding to maintain the 22-mile levee system. The flood-control project protects some 9,500 homes and businesses and was designed to prevent \$11 million in flood damage annually.

Councilman Dan Vassar had one word for the inaction of the state's leaders: shameful.

"This long-awaited project is almost completed – years after so many homes were damaged and lives disrupted," Vassar said.

"And now, they're not going to maintain what has been built? They're not going to protect

the taxpayer's investment? Shame on them."

Late in the spring legislative session, downstate lawmakers said Northwest Indiana needed to create a mechanism to fund the annual cost of maintaining the levee system. Lawmakers, who tried to cobble together a local solution, said local office holders were to blame.

"Promises were made that this project would prevent flooding," Councilman Mark Herak said. "There needs to be a funding solution. We are not willing to go back to where we were before this project was built."

Vassar said the council plans to take up the issue and discuss what remonstrance may be available to them. ☺

**INSIDE:** Highland construction manager helps families rebuild after flood destroys hundreds of homes along the Little Cal.

### SPRING CLEANUP MAY 17

If you need a spark of inspiration to complete your spring chores, the town may be providing it: Additional trash collection crews will be scheduled May 17 to pick up what typically amounts to mountains of additional trash.

Residents are encouraged to schedule their spring cleaning to coincide with the cleanup. Construction debris, concrete, household hazardous waste and leaves are not included.

If your spring cleanup means disposing of hazardous waste, please save it for the town's Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day on Aug. 27.

Items such as paint thinners, antifreeze, pesticides and pool chemicals may be dropped off at the Public Works Facility parking lot, 8001 Kennedy Avenue.

### NEW DIGITAL BILLBOARD

The Town Council and Lamar Outdoor Advertising have struck a 20-year deal for a digital billboard on town property along Indianapolis Boulevard south of 45th Street. Revenue from the billboard will augment town coffers by \$15,000 per year for the first several years and up to \$20,000 per year during the latter years of the contract.

### MEMORIAL DAY CEREMONY

The community will honor veterans from every branch of the military during a special Memorial Day ceremony at 10 a.m. May 30 at the Gazebo at Main Square Park.

**DID YOU KNOW?** Memorial Day or Decoration Day is observed the last Monday in May. It is a legal holiday and is observed in memory of those who died while serving the United States in war. Typically, the graves of the war heroes are decorated with flowers and flags throughout Northwest Indiana.

**INFO:** For more information, please call Dawn Wolak at (219) 923-0514.

## CALLING ALL ARTISTS ...

Highland's first-ever Pop-Up Gallery was so popular, plans are already in the works to host another.

The gathering brought together the talents of local artists, showcasing their work in a vacant storefront in the hope that artwork would be sold and the storefront would be rented.

Redevelopment Director Cecile Petro said about 50 people attended the first Pop-Up Gallery. A local realtor has talked to Petro about hosting a second function. No date has been set.

**INFO:** If you are a Highland artist and would like your artwork to be shown at a future event, please contact Petro at (219) 838-1080.

## YOUR COUNCILMEN



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## NEWS TIP? STORY IDEA?

Send your suggestions to:



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# WILD WEATHER

## AS STORMS BREW ACROSS THE REGION, HIGHLAND OFFICIALS WARN RESIDENTS ABOUT THE DANGERS OF SEVERE WEATHER

A parade of spring storms has raised the water levels on local streams and the concerns of Fire Chief Bill Timmer, who wants residents to be prepared.

"It's that time of year when the unexpected can happen – and happen quickly," Timmer said. "Understanding the dangers posed by tornadoes, lightning and even heavy downpours is the key to remaining safe."

Although town officials keep a close watch on the Little Calumet River whenever torrential rains pelt the community, Timmer said the greater dangers to residents are posed during severe weather when there is no time to prepare and only a few minutes to react.

"We will always watch what happens on the dike but it is 100 times better than it used to be. The bigger dangers are posed by lightning, urban flash flooding and tornadoes.

"We have had cars driving down 45th Avenue float into telephone poles during a heavy rain. Even though there is no way to know when a serious storm is going to strike, there are things we can all do to try to remain safe."

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

**WWW.READY.GOV:** Be prepared when severe weather strikes – [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov).

**WWW.NIXLE.COM:** Stay in the know with alerts to your mobile phone or computer.

### WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW



**TORNADO WATCH:** No tornado has been spotted. This information is broadcast on television, radio and the internet whenever conditions are ripe for the formation of funnel clouds. Be prepared to move to a safe area.



**TORNADO WARNING:** Tornadoes have been sighted or radar shows conditions are right for a funnel to form. Take cover on the lowest level of your home in a room that provides the most structural stability – like a bathroom – with the fewest number of windows.



**TORNADO SIREN:** A tornado has been sighted by local spotters in or near town. Take immediate cover. If you are outdoors take cover in the lowest area you can find. If you are in a car, park it and get into a ditch or low-lying area.



**FLASH FLOODING:** Cars can float trying to drive through six inches of water. If the curb is covered by water, don't drive or wade through it. Urban flooding can knock you over and the force and suction can trap you in a storm sewer.



**LIGHTNING:** The threat of lightning may exist before, during or after a storm. Very few people survive a lightning strike. The best plan is to avoid them. Go inside. If you are outside, find a low spot. Stay out of puddles and away from trees, chain link fences or anything metal.

## ONLINE SITE PROMOTES HIGHLAND BUSINESSES

All Highland businesses will be showcased as part of a new web feature the town has secured – free of charge.

In a few short weeks, every business licensed in Highland will be included on an internet portal accessible by clicking a "Shop Highland" button on the [highland.in.gov](http://highland.in.gov) web site, the official web site for the town.

The town's 500 businesses will be grouped in categories and owners will have the option of registering to add information, coupons and specials to their listing.

Redevelopment Director Cecile Petro said the new site will help drive traffic to businesses.

"I was contacted by a representative of WebQA, who said the company wanted to use Highland as a demonstration project, as it already has for Noblesville," Petro said. "We did our homework and have agreed to host this feature for 12 months. We'll have the option then to enter into a longer contract."

**MORE INFO:** Call Cecile Petro at (219) 838-1080 for more information or to learn how to register your business.

## LAKE SHORE AREA REGIONAL RECOVERY OF INDIANA



# REBUILDING LIVES

## HIGHLAND CONSTRUCTION MANAGER HELPS FAMILIES REBUILD AFTER FLOOD DESTROYS HUNDREDS OF HOMES ALONG THE LITTLE CALUMET

With a simple phone call, John Beebe was lured into the volunteer job of a lifetime helping local residents rebuild following the floodwaters that devastated homes along the Little Calumet watershed.

That was 2008. Today, more than 600 homes have been rehabbed and another five rebuilt through the efforts of a pool of volunteers and paid craftsmen, coordinated by the Lakeshore Area Regional Recovery of Indiana – known better as LARRI.

LARRI Director Jane Delligatti said when it became clear that the first response was not going to alleviate the suffering of those who lived closest to the Little Calumet River, the organization was formed under the umbrella of Lake Area United Way, along with its counterpart in Porter County, the Salvation Army and Red Cross. Lilly Endowment Inc. contributed \$15.7 million to the effort.

Beebe, a longtime Highland resident and retired construction manager, had already become entrenched in the project.

"I was called the day after the flood to help evaluate damaged homes," Beebe said. "I went in right after the police and fire. In

### HOW YOU CAN HELP

Lakeshore Area Regional Recovery of Indiana is scheduled to close its doors in September.


"We are in great need of volunteers to help finish our work," Director Jane Delligatti said. "The only special skill you need to be a volunteer with us is a willing heart."

To find out how you can help, call Delligatti at the LARRI offices at (219) 836-1325.

the early days, I was up to my knees doing what we call 'muck-and-gut.' In the weeks and months that followed, we had an army of volunteers from our area and around the country who came to help."

Workers from the Northwest Indiana Building Trades worked side-by-side with the volunteer contingent.

Through it all, Beebe has been there, coordinating efforts and ensuring that jobs were completed.

"I have worked to help folks who were impoverished before the flood and who were devastated by it," he said. "We have been able to help neighborhoods rebuild. Helping people who need help is really what life is all about." 

## POWER OUTAGE REPORTS

The town is asking residents with power outages to call NIPSCO – not 911. Calls to the police and fire dispatchers for non-emergencies can overwhelm the system, making it more difficult for callers phoning for medical, police and fire emergencies to access the system. NIPSCO's power outage phone number is (800) 464-7726.

## STREET MARKET VENDORS

Parks and Recreation is on the look-out for local produce farmers and artisans who would like to set up shop at this year's Street Market, which operates on Saturdays beginning June 11.

Rent a space by the week, by the month or save money by committing for the season. Electricity is available for a nominal fee. Registration deadline is one week prior to selling goods.

**INFO:** For more details or to register, call the park office at (219) 838-0114.

## INDIANAPOLIS BRIDGE BIDS

The start date for the Indianapolis Boulevard bridge reconstruction project has been delayed by at least one month.

Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission officials plan to award contracts for the project in late May. Town officials are eager to begin construction on the project that will eliminate the hazardous north Highland bridge and replace it with a lower, safer overpass.

## POLICE MEMORIAL SERVICE

There will be a Memorial Service to honor fallen and deceased police officers at 9 a.m. May 7 at Donald Sheppard Memorial.

A department inspection will precede the service and refreshments will be available following the service.

**INFO:** Call Officer John Hinkel at the Police Department, (219) 838-3184.

## CRIME WATCH MEETING

Lake County Prosecutor Bernard Carter will discuss current crime-fighting efforts at the next Crime Watch meeting – 6:30 p.m. May 11 at the Highland library, 2841 Jewett Avenue.

**INFO:** Call Officer Shawn Anderson at the Police Department, (219) 838-3184.

## THEATER AUDITIONS

Disney Under The Stars will be this year's tribute to 30 years of productions at the Main Square Park Gazebo. Bring your favorite Disney song and sheet music or CD to your audition. You should also be prepared to dance.

**WHEN:** 7 p.m. **May 10-11**

**WHERE:** Lincoln Center. The waiting area is in Room 17 and the auditions are in Room 19.

**AGES:** 5 and up; must be able to be on stage without parent and make all rehearsals.

**INFO:** Visit [www.highlandparks.org](http://www.highlandparks.org) or call (219) 838-0114.

## MULCHING AND COMPOSTING

Whether you're just starting out or transitioning from traditional techniques, Gardener Larry Anderson will present a two-part program on composting and mulching using everyday household products. He will also discuss how to get rid of Japanese beetles.

**WHEN:** 6:30 p.m. Thursday, **May 19**

**WHERE:** Highland Public Library • 2841 Jewett

**INFO:** Call Kathy Deal at (219) 838-2394.

## GIRLS ON THE RUN 5K

The 2011 Girls on the Run® of Northwest Indiana are gearing up for the spring 5K. The GOTR is a positive youth development program that combines an interactive curriculum and running to inspire self-respect and healthy lifestyles in pre-teen girls.

**WHEN:** 9 a.m. Saturday, **May 21**

**WHERE:** Main Square Park

**COST:** \$15; online registration ends May 12.

**INFO:** Visit [gotrofnwi.org](http://gotrofnwi.org) or email Lori Leep at [RaceDirector@gotrofnwi.com](mailto:RaceDirector@gotrofnwi.com).

## ZUMBA FITNESS

"Ditch the workout and join the party" is Zumba's motto. A high energy Latin dance workout provides an hour of fun. This is a workout for all ages, workout levels and dance abilities. Very energetic and fun.

**WHEN:** 6 to 7 p.m. **May 25-June 17**

**LOCATION:** Lincoln Center

**FEE:** \$50/\$53 for Wednesdays and Fridays; \$45/\$48 for only one day per week, must specify Wednesday or Friday.

**INFO:** Visit [www.highlandparks.org](http://www.highlandparks.org) or call (219) 838-0114.

## SUMMER CONCERT

Celebrate the season with joyful tunes at the Highland Community Band's summer performance. There is no cost to attend.

**WHEN:** 7 p.m. Wednesday, **June 1**

**WHERE:** Monbeck Auditorium at Highland High

**INFO:** Visit [www.highlandparks.org](http://www.highlandparks.org) or call (219) 838-0114.

# Tour de Highland JUNE 4

## FAMILY-FRIENDLY BICYCLE RIDE THROUGH TOWN

This is not a race or a test of stamina. This is a chance for Highland residents to enjoy a family-friendly bicycle ride through our hometown. Lunch with live entertainment will be provided at the registration site to all participants (you must be wearing the wrist band to receive food). Friends and families may join the riders for lunch for \$5 (they will be given a wrist band upon payment).

**WHEN:** 11 a.m. June 4

**WHERE:** Check-in begins at 9 a.m. at Main Square on Highway Avenue. The bike ride starts promptly at 11 a.m. and is expected to last about 90 minutes. Cookout will begin after riders return.

**REGISTRATION DEADLINE:** 4 p.m. **May 20**

**REGISTRATION FEE:** \$10 includes T-shirt and lunch

**REGISTRATION FORMS:** [www.highlandchamber.com](http://www.highlandchamber.com)

**MORE INFO:** Call (219) 923-3666 or email [info@highlandchamber.com](mailto:info@highlandchamber.com).

## COMMUNITY GARAGE SALE

Do you enjoy shopping for rare items such as comic books, sports cards, Hot wheels, autographed memorabilia and other collectibles? Roger Parker from P & P Collectibles will be promoting the card show in conjunction with the Highland Community Garage Sale. Register to sell your household items, toys, books, and more!

**WHEN:** 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, **June 4**

**WHERE:** Lincoln Center

**VENDOR FEE:** \$26.75 per day for 10' X 10' space. Tables and chairs are not provided.

**REGISTRATION DEADLINE:** May 28

**INFO:** Visit [www.highlandparks.org](http://www.highlandparks.org) or call (219) 838-0114.

## SUMMER CAMP REGISTRATION

Join us for games, crafts, songs, drama and sports activities at Parks and Rec's summer camp. There is one field trip per session.

**CAMP:** 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. **June 6 - Aug. 8**

**WHERE:** Lincoln Center

**JR. CAMPER:** Kindergarten through 3rd Grade

**SR. CAMPER:** 4th through 6th Grade

**CAMP FEE:** \$100/\$105 weekly; \$22.50/\$25 daily

**BEFORE CARE:** Before care is available from 7:30 to 8 a.m. \$25/\$30 weekly; \$5/\$6 daily

**REGISTRATION:** Health form and full payment are required. Field trips are additional.

**INFO:** Visit [www.highlandparks.org](http://www.highlandparks.org) or call (219) 838-0114.